

Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing Regarding the Governor's Proposed FY 2018-2019 Budget
February 23, 2017

Good morning, Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

I am Georgette J. Katin, Executive Director of the Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Eastern Connecticut, Inc. (SACCEC) located in Willimantic, CT; our agency is one of the nine member centers of the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence. I wish to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the Governor's proposed budget and specifically, funding for rape crisis intervention and sexual violence prevention initiatives.

SACCEC serves Windham and New London Counties and the towns of Columbia, Coventry, Mansfield, Willington and Union. Our agency's services are comprehensive, in that we provide continuing services to victims from the point at which they first report until the time the case is resolved. If the victim is a child, we will also provide counseling services to parents, siblings, grandparents or other significant friends or family members who routinely care for the children, and provide them with the tools necessary to help them and their child recover. In addition, staff are available 24 hours a day to answer questions and provide support and information. Our crisis line serves as a point of contact for clients who are in need of immediate assistance.

Our staff respond in person to hospital calls to provide crisis intervention and medical advocacy and support. Staff also provides advocacy and support during criminal investigations if the victim chooses to make a report to the police. Staff assist clients in obtaining Restraining Orders against their perpetrators, and accompany clients to court. Staff also act as liaisons for the client in coordinating with and obtaining information from medical personnel, the police, DCF, and court personnel. We also assist college students with campus administrative justice processes. We work collaboratively with the Multidisciplinary Teams (child sexual abuse investigations) and our staff provide the Family Advocacy/Crisis Intervention services at the Child Advocacy Centers in Windham and New London Counties. SACCEC provides schools and colleges in our catchment area with prevention and education programs.

In the provision of these comprehensive services we are unique; this intensive model of counseling and support has, according to research, provided the best outcomes for victims of sexual violence. The goal of this model is to ensure that those who have been traumatized by an incident of violence will not only be supported, but *regain their pre-trauma level of functioning* and continue to thrive. Research has shown that victims of trauma are significantly less likely to develop long term disorders such as PTSD, depression or impairments in their ability to function (work, attend school, be successful in school, maintain relationships), if they receive prompt intervention, services and appropriate support. Research and studies also indicate that the majority of victims experience a complete recovery to their pre-traumatic level of functioning given timely and intensive intervention.

Untreated sexual trauma has a profound effect on our community and has often been correlated with poor school performance, behavioral problems, drug and alcohol abuse, loss of employment, criminal or violent behavior and sexual offenses.

Our agency believes that the Governor's proposed budget acknowledges the overall cost effectiveness of our program. We respectfully request that you approve the level of funding for rape crisis intervention that is included in the Governor's budget.

I thank you again for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the victims who seek our services.